

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'These books give a perspective we don't often hear'

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 10 MARCH 11, 2019

Social crisis continues in Venezuela — US hands off!

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S.-groomed Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó, who proclaimed himself president in January, appealed to Washington Feb. 25 to take more aggressive measures to oust the government of Nicolás Maduro. But Vice President Mike Pence, who met with Guaidó and government officials from 11 Latin American countries in Bogotá, brushed him aside and said Washington favors stepped-up economic pressure.

Washington, Guaidó and the governments of Colombia and Brazil provocatively attempted to move a handful of trucks with food and medicine across the Venezuelan border Feb. 23. Hundreds of opposition-organized protesters ran alongside the trucks throwing stones to escalate a confrontation.

While a small number of soldiers defected, the military brass is still backing Maduro. Soldiers and police

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W.Va. workers discuss crisis, importance of teachers strike

Socialist Workers Party campaigns in coal country



Militant photos: Above, Glova Scott; inset, Amy Husk. Above, picket line in Hurricane, West Virginia, during Feb. 19-20 strike by school workers. Inset, Socialist Workers Party member Samir Hazboun, left, talks with former miner Eddie McLaughlin in Kermit. SWP campaigners went door to door talking to workers about conditions they face and need for solidarity with strikers.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

On Feb. 20 Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Kentucky governor, and campaign supporter Samir Hazboun went to West Virginia's coal country to talk to working people at their doorsteps



about conditions they face, and about the school workers strike that day.

Their fight is shaped by the long working-class tradition of struggle and solidarity that comes from decades of class battles waged by the United Mine Workers union. The school workers beat back efforts by the legislature to attack their unions and working conditions. After a so-called education reform bill was voted down, the workers stayed out on

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Trump, Kim meet for talks to denuclearize Korea peninsula

BY TERRY EVANS

President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had their second face-to-face summit Feb. 27-28 in Hanoi to continue discussions on the denuclearization of Korea. Any steps towards that end will be good for working people in Korea, the United States, Japan and more broadly.

Prior to the summit Washington's top envoy to North Korea, Stephen Biegun, said the U.S. government would consider beginning to normalize relations with North Korea. "We didn't say we won't do anything until you do everything," he said. The North Koreans are pressing for Washington to sign a declaration finally ending the Korean War it waged 70 years ago.

Massive U.S. bombings and the use of napalm destroyed much of Korea during the 1950-53 war, after Washington — with Moscow's collusion — split the country in two and imposed the brutal Syngman Rhee dictatorship in the South. A powerful uprising by working people there was drowned in blood.

Despite the massive devastation they inflicted during the Korean War, the U.S. rulers failed to crush the workers and peasants government that in 1946 came to power in North Korea — the first military defeat for

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UK out of EU is better for workers to struggle against British rulers



AP/Frank Augstein

Jan. 15 London protest against further delays in Britain getting out of the European Union.

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

MANCHESTER, England — A crisis over how to handle the result of the 2016 referendum, when millions of working people voted for the U.K. to leave the European Union, is wracking the two main capitalist parties — Conservative and Labour. The leaders of both parties have shifted their positions and both parties are bleeding members. Many have intensified scaremongering about the perils of a "no-deal" split with the EU — with predictions of food shortages — and

there are increasing calls to overturn the vote and hold a new referendum.

The U.K. rulers are divided as they confront the more rapid economic and political decline of British imperialism compared to its rivals. For working people, a U.K. out of the EU would be good — it would allow them to focus on their main enemy, their own capitalist ruling class and the British government.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn now says his party is open to a new referendum to revote on Brexit. Prime Minister

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Liberals champion FBI role in hysteria to oust Donald Trump

BY TERRY EVANS

A new book and round of widely covered media interviews by former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe give an idea of the extent of the spy agency leadership's functioning as a partisan political operation working to overturn the results of the 2016 presidential election.

McCabe's musings have won universal praise from liberals and all other anti-Trumpers after publication of his "tell-all" book, *The Threat: How the FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump*.

The FBI has a long history of targeting, spying on and seeking to disrupt the labor movement; the Socialist Workers Party and other working-class political groups; Black rights fighters and opponents of Washington's wars. But going after one of the candidates of the rulers' two political parties is something new.

Behind their zeal to depose Trump by any means possible, McCabe and

other liberals' real concern is working people. They fear the millions of workers who voted for Trump looking for ways out of the effects of the rulers' wars abroad and deteriorating conditions of life and work imposed on them by the crisis of capitalism today.

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Oakland teachers strike for pay raise, smaller class size

Yellow vest protesters stand up to French government attacks

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For the 15th consecutive week, tens of thousands of workers and farmers, small businesspeople and self-employed, from provincial France to outer city suburbs, rallied in cities around the country Feb. 23 against President Emmanuel Macron and the French government. They are demanding higher wages, an end to attacks on their livelihoods and for Macron to resign.

While actions have declined from some 300,000 in the streets and at traffic stops nationwide Nov. 17 to a government estimate of some 47,000 Feb. 23, they have shown staying power.

Despite the French president backing down from the onerous “green” fuel tax that triggered the popular protests, as well as conceding a small increase to some pensions and the minimum wage; despite heavy police assaults and a barrage of media and official slanders against the yellow vest movement as “violent,” “anti-Semitic” and even “fascist,” the protests retain popular support and are a topic of broad working-class discussion.

Masses of men and women from nowhere, not organized by established political parties and unions, erupted in protest. They were reacting to the serious crisis they face caused by the workings of the dog-eat-dog capitalist profit system. And they despise a government that they increasingly see rules for the rich and treats them with nothing but disdain.

“It’s a very humanist movement and we’re doing this for everyone,” Madeleine, a 33-year-old unemployed work-

er, told Reuters Feb. 16. Many say for the first time they have found “fraternity” — that is, working-class solidarity — in these actions. They are like working people elsewhere branded as “deplorables” or “populists” — from the United States to Britain, Italy to eastern Europe.

Hoping to get the yellow vests off the streets, Macron in January called for a “great national debate.” This “great debate is mostly a great masquerade,” Mathieu Styrna, a 36-year-old carpenter from northern France told Agence France-Presse Jan. 26.

Macron’s “base is France’s meritocratic elite, the people who have benefited from the same global trends that have left most of the country behind,” Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* Feb. 22. And the yellow vest movement has instilled deep fear in French ruling-class circles and their hangers-on.

Many children “are now open and want to understand why their parents are in this movement,” Natasha, a protester at Pontault-Combault near Paris, told the media. “They get more interested in politics. I think we need to explain because that’s not the kind of stuff they learn in school.”

Under cover of the protests, a tiny minority of anarchists, other ultralefts and a handful of frustrated protesters have been damaging property and clashing with police. Media coverage of this has given the rulers ammunition to attack the massive, peaceful demonstrations as violent. Macron authorized the police to clamp down, using riot cops, tear gas, rubber bullets and water



Serge D'Ignazio

Yellow vest protest in Paris Feb. 23, the 15th weekend of continuous demonstrations. Many say that for the first time they have found fraternity — working class solidarity — in these protests.

cannons. Numerous people have been injured, often seriously.

A government-promoted French nationalist “red scarves” march against “violence” Jan. 27 drew thousands behind chants of “Yes to democracy, no to revolution!” One reporter noted it was “noticeably more middle-class” than the “yellow vests.”

Anti-Semitic smear

Rightist French academic Alain Finkielkraut, who is Jewish, is widely hated by workers for his anti-working-class views. He was spotted near the Feb. 16 march in Paris. Some individuals called out “Fascist!” “Zionist” and “Palestine! Go back to Israel!” as most marchers just ignored him.

French officials and the media seized on this incident, linking it to a supposed recent spike in anti-Jewish, pro-Nazi graffiti and vandalism, to try to tarnish the yellow vests with accusations of anti-Semitism. This fits with their efforts to paint the protesters as a less “smart” group of outcasts from polite society that need to be controlled.

“The yellow vest movement has provoked a reaction that has many precedents,” Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbert wrote in an article entitled “France’s Class Wars” in the February *Le Monde Diplomatique*. When “there is undisguised class struggle, everyone has to choose sides,” the article says,

“even the most liberal, educated and distinguished people drop any pretence of peaceful coexistence. Fear robs them of their composure.”

During the Paris Commune in 1871, the first time in history a workers’ uprising had formed a government, Halimi and Rimbert explain, the poet Leconte de Lisle was horrified by the revolution, calling the masses “this league of all the underclass, all the useless people.” Similarly, author Gustave Flaubert said the “first remedy should be to end universal suffrage,” and novelist Emile Zola said the slaughter of 20,000 Communards by the French army was “a horrible necessity to calm some of their fevers.”

Halimi and Rimbert compiled a litany of today’s French meritocrats who have reacted to the yellow vests with the same scorn. They quote novelist and former editor of *Le Figaro* Franz-Olivier Giesbert, who called the yellow vests “hordes of losers and looters” who are “consumed by resentment as though by lice.”

Rightist intellectual Pascal Bruckner thanked cops who brutally attack demonstrators, saying their assaults and bloodshed had “calmly saved the Republic” from “the ‘barbarians’ and the ‘hooded mob.’” Sounding like one of his U.S. counterparts today, meritocrat Bernard-Henri Levy called the yellow vests “white trash.”

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THE MILITANT

Support workers’ strike wave in Mexico

After thousands of workers struck 45 factories Jan. 25 in Matamoros, Mexico, near U.S. border, and won a 20 percent pay increase, more workers were inspired to fight. The ‘Militant’ covers struggle of workers standing up for their rights in Mexico and throughout the world.



Workers rally Jan. 31 in Matamoros, Mexico.

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W.Va.: SWP discusses crisis

Continued from front page

strike another day, saying they just didn't trust the government.

In Williamson, in Mingo County, a stronghold of past battles waged by the UMW, Husk and Hazboun talked to Austin Boles, a worker at Food City. "We are living under a dictatorship of the rich," Husk said, "and workers are paying for their crisis with our health and lives."

"Oh, I agree with that!" Boles responded. He said he had been born with a heart condition and had three open heart surgeries. Boles said he makes "barely enough to make ends meet."

"And I hate the pharmaceutical companies," he added. "They rob working people and get young people hooked on drugs." He knows a lot of people who overdosed and died because of this.

"Young people suffer horrible despair and alienation because they have nothing to look forward to under capitalism," Husk said. "If there was a social movement like the fight of the United Mine Workers to defend workers on the job or a mass political movement like the civil rights struggle or the mass mobilizations that forced the U.S. rulers to end their war in Vietnam, young people would see their own power and learn their self-worth. They wouldn't turn to drugs and suicide like they do today."

"I agree with that too," said Boles. He signed up for an introductory subscription to the *Militant* and said he wanted to keep in touch.

Impact of miners' battles

SWP campaigners got another picture of the depth of the impact of the miners' battles as they joined school workers in protests at the West Virginia state Capitol during their strike. Retail workers Glova Scott and Sarah Ullman met Makayla Amos there when they came from Washington, D.C., to show solidarity.

Amos described how her grandfather, who used to work in the mines, loves the teachers' battles. "One of his favorite things is to drive around and bring coffee to the teachers where they're picketing," she said. "In rural areas where we live the schools are often up roads that nobody travels on. So the teachers go to places where people can see them. In Craigsville, where he lives, they go to Rite Aid. Where I live it's McDonald's. So he goes out there to bring coffee and solidarity."

Husk and Hazboun also knocked on doors in Kermit, where they met Eddie McLaughlin, who's unemployed. When Husk asked what he thought of the West Virginia school workers strike,

McLaughlin said he wasn't sure about their fight.

Husk, who is a health care worker, said a lot of workers "go into teaching or health care because they think they can make a difference, but you learn that the system isn't set up to help people. Under capitalism, health care is really about profits and the only education the rulers care about is training young people to know their place."

Hazboun added, "The rich don't care about educating our kids. They can send their children to the best private schools just like they can pay for the best health care. But they educate *our* kids to be obedient workers, not independent thinkers."

"The school workers are standing up to attacks on *all* our living standards," said Husk, "They learned important lessons from coal miners' battles over the years in this region. They reach out to involve the working-class community, to see that kids get food and shelter during their strike so parents can go to work. Their fight shows the way forward to rebuild the labor movement."

"I agree with that," said McLaughlin, who used to work as a roof bolter in an underground mine. "It was dangerous work. Everyone in the mines deserves good pay and benefits."

McLaughlin also served in the army in the Middle East. He described his anger when his daughter died while he was overseas and the military wouldn't find a way to get him home in time to bury her.

He told Husk and Hazboun that he'd also been in prison. When he got out a lawyer told him it would cost \$30,000 to get back his voting rights and his right to carry a gun. "They want to rob me just to get my rights back!" he said.

"We're fighting in Kentucky to get back the right to vote for those who have been convicted of a felony," Hazboun said. "They fought and won this in Florida last year."

McLaughlin got a copy of the *Militant* to learn more about the SWP and working-class issues.

To join in campaigning with the SWP, or to find out more, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you. (See directory on page 4.)

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

SWP campaigns for 'Amnesty for immigrant workers!'



Militant/Mary Martin

SEATTLE — When Henry Dennison, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council here, and supporters were campaigning Feb. 18, they knocked on the door of 28-year-old Katrina Schmitt, who works two jobs as a house cleaner and a caregiver.

"My party calls for amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S.," Dennison said after introducing himself and the party, "and we say we've got to build and strengthen the unions, organize the unorganized, including those who don't have papers recognized by the government."

"I'm glad to hear you say this," Schmitt said, pointing to her kids playing in the living room. "Their dad is Mexican. He just got picked up by immigration two weeks ago and is in the Tacoma Detention Center awaiting deportation. He's not a criminal, he's a skilled construction worker here trying to support our family. He lines up in the mornings to get picked for day work. So now I'm a single mom trying to make it, and also trying to find a lawyer for him."

"What you say about the unions is also true," she said. "The caregivers here are organized. I didn't know too much about being in a union, but they really have your back when you need them."

"At least you are talking about issues that matter to people," she added. "During the 2016 elections, I looked at the two choices, and said neither one. I'm not voting this time." Dennison showed her a copy of *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and the cartoon in it that shows two houses with signs outside, one saying "She's worse," the other "He's worse."

"That pretty much captures how I felt," Schmitt said. "I can't buy these today but can I subscribe to the *Militant* and buy some of these books online?" she asked. Dennison explained how she could subscribe online and promised to drop back by her house in a week after her payday with the books. He also gave her the name of an immigration legal service he knows, saying he'd been part of the party's work in support of farmworkers for years.

— MARY MARTIN

Join May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba April 21 - May 5

Meet Cuban working people; do voluntary farm work; join hundreds of thousands at May Day march in Havana.

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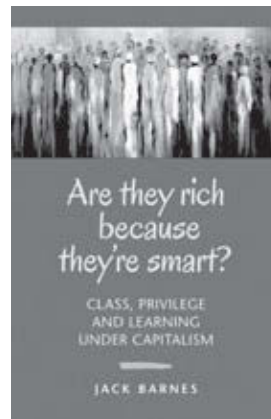
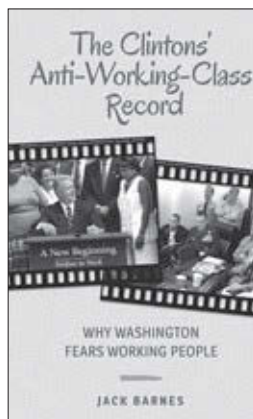
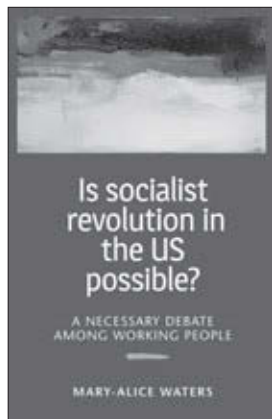
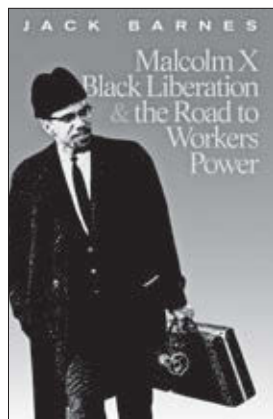
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Crisis continues in Venezuela

Continued from front page
blocked the trucks. Along with *col-ectivos*, pro-Maduro armed civilian groups, they killed at least four protesters and injured over 300.

Workers and farmers in Venezuela face a deep social and economic crisis. In the face of widespread malnutrition, shortages of medicine and other social ills 3 million Venezuelans — demoralized by the crisis and the lack of any leadership that points a way forward for working people — have fled the country, many to Colombia. But Maduro claims that there is no crisis.

On Jan. 28, Washington froze all Venezuelan government bank accounts held in the U.S. including those of the state-owned PDVSA oil company and its subsidiary, Citgo. On Feb. 25 Washington imposed additional sanctions. It is working people, already hard hit by the capitalist economic crisis and the policies of the Venezuelan government, who pay the price.

The Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. calls on workers to demand U.S. hands off Venezuela!

Chávez's Bolivarian revolution

Hugo Chávez was elected president of Venezuela in 1998 in the wake of an upsurge by working people that took place over the previous decade. Chávez raised expectations among workers by vowing to end corruption and the “frittering away” of the vast oil wealth. Meanwhile, working people sought to advance their demands for land, jobs and gained confidence and experience in struggle.

However, Chávez, a former paratrooper, and the military officers around him — instead of leading working people on a revolutionary course — used oil profits to fund welfare programs. This demobilized workers and farmers and diverted them from taking power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

This is the opposite of how Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement led Cuban workers and farmers to take political power into their own hands, and used their new government to advance their interests toward the overthrow of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The attempts of the Chávez and Maduro governments to “administer” the capitalist market were doomed from the start. When oil prices plummeted, funding for welfare programs contracted. The crisis was made worse by policies

that enriched a layer of the capitalist class and many in the military brass entrusted with running Venezuela's oil and other industries, as well as by widespread corruption.

At the same time, the U.S. rulers hate the ties between Venezuela and the revolutionary government of Cuba. They fear workers in Venezuela and the Americas could see Cuba's revolution as an example for themselves. Cuba sent tens of thousands of volunteers to help set up and staff medical clinics, teach in literacy programs, promote sports and as military advisers.

Washington aims to take advantage of the crisis in Venezuela to taint the image of the Cuban Revolution among working people by claiming that what exists in Venezuela is “socialism.”

Defend sovereignty of Venezuela

Those who tie opposition to U.S. interference in Venezuela to support for the policies of the Maduro government weaken the fight to defend the sovereignty of Venezuela.

As part of its call for protests demanding “Hands Off Venezuela!” the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity says that under Maduro, Venezuela “is working and functioning normally despite the hysteria of chaos.”

How then to explain the empty store



Reuters/Carlos Eduardo Ramirez

People wait on long lines outside store while motorists also wait to get fuel in San Cristóbal, Venezuela, Nov. 10. Working people face shortages in food, medicine, other necessities.

shelves, the long lines for subsidized necessities, the resurgence of malaria, diphtheria and measles, all of which began years before U.S. imperialism implemented any major sanctions?

Max Blumenthal, a liberal commentator who has written for the *Nation*, posted a video to YouTube Feb. 21 about his visit to the Gama supermarket in Caracas. He intersperses shots of this well-stocked supermarket with reports by mainstream U.S. media about empty shelves in stores throughout the country, implying those reports are false.

But Blumenthal leaves out some key facts. Gama caters to the upper middle class and capitalists, not working people. It specializes in imports. He picked up a bottle of olive oil and noted that it costs about \$40 — three and a half times the monthly minimum wage.

Like working people in Cuba who took power in 1959, workers in Venezuela need to forge their own organization and leadership, in the face of difficult challenges today. Working people in the U.S. can give solidarity by demanding that Washington keep its hands off.

UK out of EU is better for workers to struggle

Continued from front page

Enter Theresa May says she's now open to seeking a postponement of the March 29 deadline to let “negotiations” with capitalist leaders on the Continent and maneuvers in British politics drag on — while the U.K. remains in the EU.

Leading Members of Parliament from both parties resigned over the last two weeks, forming the Independent Group, calling for a new referendum. A number of the former Labour MPs also cited the anti-Semitism rife in the party and its leadership as a reason they resigned.

All those who push for a revote believe they should force recalcitrant workers to vote again until they do what these “smarter” politicians want.

“I want out. We'll have a lot of s--- to go through but we'll come out the other side,” Charmaine Patton, 37, told *The Times*. Patton works at a bagel-making plant in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

Angered at sentiment like this, European Council President Donald Tusk talked Feb. 6 of a “special place in hell” for people who “promoted Brexit” without a plan. His comments reflect the contempt and fear of ruling-class politicians for the millions of working people, like Patton, who voted to leave the EU.

The capitalist powers that head the EU want to slow down the coming apart of the bloc as conflicts among its rival powers sharpen. They want to make it harder for the U.K. to leave and dissuade other nations at odds with the EU's dominant powers from doing the same.

The EU was set up as a protectionist bloc to rival the U.S. capitalists, with dreams of it becoming a European-wide state. It has been a tool for the German and French rulers to enrich themselves by sucking profits from weaker capitalist countries. Working people everywhere pay the price.

Some bosses have spoken out against the possibility of a “no-deal Brexit.” Ford Motor Co. issued a statement Feb. 13 saying a “no-deal” would be “catastrophic for the UK auto industry.”

Workers face capitalist crisis

There is no letup in the grinding capitalist crisis — years of attacks on living standards, endless wars and contempt by capitalist politicians, British and European — that led millions of working people to vote to leave the EU.

Some 844,000 workers here were on so-called “zero hours contracts” at the beginning of 2019, where the bosses don't guarantee any set hours. “Self-employment” has increased, where workers have no minimum wage, and workers' average earnings are still below what they were before the 2008 crisis.

May's Conservative government is trying to squeeze out a deal that would commit the U.K. to most aspects of EU membership in a “transition period” that would go on indefinitely.

Another feature of the “deal” the government is pressing for is to avoid border checks between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, allowing free movement of goods across the island. This would keep the U.K. in a customs union with the EU until they both agree to end it. Mixed in with this is the British capitalist rulers' fear of further loosening of their grip on Ireland, their former colony, and the eventual coming apart of the United Kingdom.

“Millions of working people voted for the U.K. to get out of the EU in the 2016 referendum, not for a “deal that meant staying in,” said Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council in Baguley ward. “We're in favor of getting out now. It's the only way to bring about better conditions of struggle for workers and other exploited producers against the capitalists and their government in the U.K.”

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Oakland teachers strike for pay raise, smaller class sizes

BY ERIC SIMPSON

OAKLAND, Calif. — Teachers walked off the job here Feb. 21, almost two years after their last contract expired. The 3,000 Oakland Education Association members are fighting for a 12 percent wage increase over three years, for school district officials to hire more support workers like speech pathologists and counselors, for an end to school closures, and for a reduction in class sizes.

Oakland Unified School District officials now offer an 8.5 percent pay hike over four years. Wages for school workers in Oakland are the lowest in the area.

Other school workers, including many organized by the Service Employees International Union and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, are honoring the picket lines.

The strike has won widespread support from working people in the area — only a few of Oakland's 36,000 public school students showed up at the city's 86 schools when the pickets went up. Negotiations have broken off.

Picket lines went up at 6:30 a.m. across the city. A high percentage of teachers joined the lines, the union reported. When this *Militant* correspondent joined the picketing at Castlemont High School, the teachers were marching alongside students, the school nurse, psychologist and other school workers and area supporters.

Some 3,000 teachers, other school workers and their supporters carpooled from the picket lines and elsewhere to protest outside Oakland City Hall at midday and marched to the school district headquarters. Many parents joined the action along with their school-age children. "Keep Teachers in Oakland!" was a popular sign.

The highly paid school district officials have shown no interest in educating working-class youth. They've

announced plans to close 24 schools, and instead encourage expansion of publicly funded, privately run charter schools.

"In Oakland we have the highest number of special needs students, English-as-a-second language students, African-American students, and Latino students in the East Bay," David Correa, picket captain at Bret Harte Middle School, told the *Militant*. "We also have the lowest-paid teachers in the East Bay. It seems to me like there's a connection between those two facts."

Because of the low pay, bad working conditions and overcrowded classes, nearly 20 percent of teachers quit each year.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Teachers on strike in Oakland, California, Feb. 21 march for wage raise, smaller class sizes, end to threatened school closures. Students, parents and other workers joined action in solidarity.

Florida prisoners fight seizure of their digital music

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Officials in Florida have confiscated all the digital music and audiobooks purchased by workers behind bars in every prison in the state. The reason? So that the Florida Department of Corrections could "enter into a more profitable contract with a new vendor," said a news release issued by the Florida Justice Institute and the Social Justice Law Collective, both of which joined to file a federal class-action lawsuit Feb. 19 against this seizure of prisoners' possessions.

In 2011 the Florida Department of Corrections contracted with private companies to provide media services. Prisoners were permitted to purchase MP3 players and media files, with the promise, as one advertisement put it, "Once music is purchased, you'll always own it!"

"Prisoners were promised they would be able to own these media files forever," Dante Trevisani, executive director of the Florida Justice Institute, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Feb. 22. "The department went back on its promise, switched vendors and prisoners had to surrender their music."

"This is one of the only things they

have in prison," he added. "Their property was taken without compensation."

This policy, the lawsuit says, is a clear violation of the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment and Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Prison authorities presided and profited from the sale of more than 30,300 players and 6.7 million song downloads, the Department of Corrections admits. That's about \$11.3 million worth of music. The Department of Corrections took their cut, pocketing \$1.4 million in commissions.

In 2018 prison authorities signed a contract with JPay, which already makes a hefty profit operating banking services and the phone system at state-run prisons.

Prisoners have been barred from transferring any of their digital media files they had purchased from the previous contractor onto the new players. And authorities set a Jan. 23 deadline requiring prisoners to turn in their old media players and files, or — for a fee — they could have them turned over to a friend or their family outside the prison. To listen to music or audio books,

inmates will now have to buy a new media player from JPay and repurchase all their digital files — a profit boon for JPay and more commissions for the Department of Corrections.

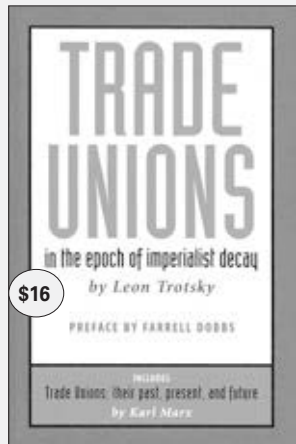
Katherine Freeman, who is incarcerated at Homestead Correctional Institution, filed a grievance against this operation, saying she would lose more than \$2,000 worth of music she had purchased since 2014.

In justifying the prison's new policy, assistant warden Timothy Hoey wrote, "It was not feasible to download content from one vendor's device to another, not only due to incompatibility reasons, but the download of content purchased from one vendor to another vendor's device would negate the new vendor's ability to be compensated for their services."

In simple language, profits come first, and the rights of the prisoners count not at all. They're just supposed to start out all over paying more and more.

The lawsuit isn't seeking money for the prisoners, Trevisani said, "but to somehow give prisoners access to the digital media files they already purchased."

Recommended reading



Food for thought—and action—from leaders of three generations of the revolutionary workers movement — Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and Farrell Dobbs. Invaluable for workers relearning today what a strike is, how it can be fought and won, and are interested in ideas about how the entire system of capitalist exploitation can be ended.

pathfinderpress.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 14, 1994

SYDNEY, Australia — Five hundred dock workers, members of the Maritime Union of Australia, walked off the job February 10 at the two Sydney port operations of Australian Stevedores. They struck to oppose the forced redundancies (permanent layoffs) meted out that day to 55 dock workers in Sydney.

That same day 900 workers at 13 other Australian Stevedores terminals around the country walked out in solidarity. They returned to work the next day but imposed bans on overtime, double shifts, and use of casual labor.

Strikers report that MUA members on tugs and stranded ships have given their "total support" to the strike.

The company is the larger of two that virtually control the wharves throughout Australia. Some 30-40 ships were stranded, tying up tens of millions of dollars of cargo.



March 14, 1969

President Nixon's declaration that "we will not tolerate attacks which result in heavier casualties to our men at a time that we are honestly trying to seek peace at the conference table" has the sickening ring of the big-lie technique.

With U.S. bombs raining down on South Vietnam to an extent never before known in war; with more than half a million American men stationed in that country to carry on a genocidal war for the petty dictators in Saigon; it is clear who bears the blame for American and other casualties in that country.

The administration's hypocritical outrage over the NLF response to their continuing warfare shows that now, as when Washington first launched its invasion, the purpose is to crush a national liberation struggle. Nixon is apparently indignant because the Vietnamese refuse to yield despite Washington's bombs.



March 11, 1944

The struggles of the North Italian workers, which have been raging ever since the Nazi occupation, and have led to greater and ever more frequent strikes, came to a head this week in a general strike of 6 million workers. Industrial production in North Italy is virtually at a standstill. The general strike has already acquired a scope and revolutionary intensity which equals and possibly surpasses the titanic struggles that followed immediately upon Mussolini's downfall.

The revolutionary indignation has been smoldering for months. Railroad workers in the Milan area were paid in January with requisition certificates for food, which many local stores would not honor. Workers in a motor factory received 25 percent of their salaries in money, 50 percent in war loan certificates "redeemable immediately on the reconquest of the Italian Mainland."

‘These books give a perspective we don’t often hear’

Havana International Book Fair event discusses class struggle in the United States

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA — “When I read these four volumes on the struggles of the Teamsters, I discovered things I didn’t know,” said Silvio Jova. The most important was, “I learned that U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was no saint. I didn’t know he had a record of repression” against the U.S. labor movement.

Jova, a member of the editorial board of *CTC*, the magazine of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), was speaking at a Feb. 14 event that launched the Spanish-language edition of *Teamster Bureaucracy*. The book is the last of the four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs on the 1930s Teamsters union organizing drive, of which the author was a central leader. The entire set is now available in Spanish for the first time.

Yoel Cordoví, vice president of the Cuban History Institute, struck a similar note at the event, which was part of the Havana International Book Fair. He presented *In Defense of the US Working Class*, by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press.

“Given the world we’re living in,” Cordoví said, “this book is very timely. It gives us a perspective we don’t often hear — a firsthand view of struggles by workers, by farmers within the empire, within the United States.”

Róger Calero, who chaired the Feb. 14 event, told the audience of 50 that *In Defense of the US Working Class*, published by Pathfinder Press, is based on a program that featured presentations by Waters and a panel of four workers and a farmer from the United States, who described concretely the economic and social conditions U.S. working people face today and the struggles they are waging. It was part of last year’s May Day International Conference in Havana, sponsored by the Cuban History Institute and the CTC.

Cordoví recalled that when Waters was first invited by Cuban History Institute President René González Barrios to organize a session of the 2018 conference, she had said, “Well, we’re not professional historians or researchers but workers, trade unionists, communists.” González Barrios had replied that this was exactly what they needed.

Books for fighting workers: The Teamsters Series

Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s by Farrell Dobbs



“The principal lesson of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

\$15 each (normally \$19)
all four for \$40
(normally \$76)



Feb. 14 panel at Havana book fair. From left, Róger Calero, chair; Yoel Cordoví, vice president of Cuban History Institute; Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press; Silvio Jova, member of editorial board of Cuban trade union magazine.

“What better panel than one made up of workers involved in the day-to-day problems” and struggles within the United States, said Cordoví.

Waters, he said, posed three questions in the book that really made him think. The first was, “Did the 2016 electoral victory of Donald Trump register a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny and every other form of ideological reaction among working people in the U.S.?”

“I would’ve answered that question in the affirmative,” Cordoví said. “But then it becomes harder to answer the other two.”

Waters had also asked, “Is that why tens of millions of workers of all races voted for Trump?” And thirdly, “Is a socialist revolution in the U.S. really possible? Or are those like ourselves who answer with an unhesitating ‘Yes’ a new variety of utopian socialist fools, however well-meaning?”

Cordoví pointed to the 2018 strike by teachers and other school workers in West Virginia that Waters describes in the book, emphasizing what it showed about the dignity, solidarity and fighting capacity of working people. He urged everyone present to read *In Defense of the US Working Class*, stating, “There’s more to the picture than many might have thought.”

1930s Teamsters struggles

“The four books on the history of the

Teamsters struggles in the 1930s and ‘40s give us lessons that everyone needs to study,” Jova said in his remarks.

The Teamsters series chronicles the 1930s battles that led to the unionization of a quarter million workers in the trucking industry across 11 states in the Midwest. Dobbs and other members of the Communist League of America, forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party, became leaders of that fighting Teamster organizing drive.

The union forged an alliance with working farmers, organized the unemployed as a section of the union, launched a union defense guard that prevented an employer-backed fascist recruitment effort from gaining a foothold in Minneapolis, and led working-class opposition to Washington’s preparations for entry into the second imperialist world war. For this, the U.S. government framed up and imprisoned 18 leaders of the SWP and the Teamsters under the infamous Smith Act on charges of advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government.

Jova said Dobbs’ books shattered his view of U.S. government policy under the Roosevelt administration. Previously he had simply accepted the position held by many in the Cuban labor movement that Roosevelt’s so-called Good Neighbor policy — supposedly ending a long history of U.S. military intervention in Latin America — was beneficial to working people in general and particularly in Cuba. Jova said it had never occurred to him that Roosevelt’s New Deal policies might not have benefited working people in the United States.

He said he had accepted the view that Roosevelt’s pressure on Cuban strongman Fulgencio Batista for greater democracy made it possible to establish the Confederation of Cuban Workers in 1939.

In fact, this political stance toward the Roosevelt presidency was promoted not only in Cuba and the United States but worldwide by the Stalin-led Communist International. Adopted at the international’s 1935 congress, this Popular Front line of class collaboration with “democratic” imperialism was imposed on Communist Parties, which everywhere were ordered to support “progressive” capitalist parties and governments.

In Cuba the CP (later renamed Popular Socialist Party) backed Batista, campaigning for his election as president

in 1940, and two CP leaders joined his cabinet in 1943–44.

The powerful union organizing drives of the 1930s, and the gains wrested from the capitalist rulers as a result, were not due to any “democratic tendencies” among them, however. They were won in the course of pitched class battles against the capitalist class and their governments, in the United States and Cuba alike.

Jova said Dobbs’ account gave him a more accurate understanding of the class struggle in the United States, and “I will never again view Roosevelt as a saint.” But he still saw Roosevelt’s policies toward the Cuban government as helpful.

History of Cuban workers movement

“Another question these books by Pathfinder make us rethink is Trotsky and Trotskyism,” Jova said, adding that Trotskyism is not viewed favorably in Cuba. According to the accounts he had read in history books, he said, those known as Trotskyists promoted “disunity” in the Cuban labor movement in the decades before the revolution.

Moreover, Jova said, Eusebio Mujal, the gangster-like union chief who in the 1950s became the Batista dictatorship’s



Students at University of Las Villas in Santa Clara look over and select books Feb. 19 after presentation and discussion with workers from U.S. and U.K. on the class struggle in the United States.



enforcer in the CTC, with a hand in the torture and murder of untold numbers of workers, “had been a Trotskyist.”

Jova was echoing longtime Stalinist slanders against Russian communist leader Leon Trotsky and the international movement he led. During the 1930s, as the counterrevolutionary caste in Moscow consolidated its rule, not only were many millions arrested and sent to work and die in Siberian labor camps, but hundreds of thousands of communist workers were imprisoned and executed. In the international workers movement, opponents of the Stalinist course were branded “Trotskyite splitters” and “fascists.”

In Cuba, the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party (PSP) sought to discredit workers known as Trotskyists by labeling

the hated Batista henchman Mujal a “Trotskyist.” They pointed to the fact that Mujal at one point had been part of a group identified with the international forces led by Trotsky that fought for a return to the political course led by Lenin.

Jova went on to say that while he knew Mujal was called a Trotskyist, he also knew that in December 1958, only weeks before the triumph of the revolutionary war, Rebel Army commander Raúl Castro gave responsibility for organizing the Congress of Workers in Arms in the liberated territory of the Second Eastern Front to Antonio “Nico” Torres, a rail worker in Guantánamo and leader of the July 26 Movement in the region, “who came out of the Trotskyist movement.” And that gave him pause for thought, Jova said.

Torres was “a fighter for the unity of the July 26 Movement,” Jova noted. He opposed efforts by other July 26 Movement members who wanted to exclude elected delegates who were PSP members from the Congress.

Jova said reading Dobbs’ account and learning about the course of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States reinforced what he already knew about “Nico” Torres. He concluded that there was much more to the question of Trotskyism than he had realized.

Later, during the discussion period, Waters answered Jova. “To imply that Mujal was a ‘Trotskyist,’ she said, is as slanderous as it would be ‘to call fascist dictator Mussolini a communist because he had once been a leader of the left wing of the Italian Socialist Party out of



Left, Griselda Aguilera speaks from the floor at Havana meeting. On a recent U.S. tour speaking about the Cuban Revolution, she said she learned that “working people in the U.S. defend their rights.” Above, school workers rally in Charleston, West Virginia, during 2018 strike.

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ing class together with many layers of fellow exploited producers — fails to do so. And this is true in the United States above all.

It may seem strange that I start this way, but it is what the two books we are presenting today are about. *In Defense of the US Working Class* by myself and *Teamster Bureaucracy* by Farrell Dobbs are not just books. They are part of the weaponry we need to arm ourselves for the class battles ahead. Those battles will not be of our choosing or, to begin with, of our making. They will be imposed on us by the capitalist rulers who are driven by the lawful workings of their own system with its inevitable breakdowns.

I want to repeat what the closing paragraphs of *In Defense of the US Working Class* emphasize. This sobering, realistic assessment of what lies ahead for working people — whether we live in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific or the Americas — is reason for neither panic nor demoralization and despair. To the contrary.

Yes, there will be dark moments and new defeats in the years ahead. We know that. We will be obliged to face them with honesty, speaking the difficult truth to the toilers and drawing the necessary lessons for ourselves and others, as Fidel and the Cuban revolutionary leadership have set an example in doing from the earliest days of struggle.

But defeats are *not* inevitable.

What is inevitable are new revolutionary struggles. And it is only through those battles that class consciousness

which the communist movement there was founded.”

Concluding his remarks, Jova said that above all, the Teamsters books “help us understand that it’s among working people that there are forces that can lead a change of course in the United States,” and urged everyone to read them.

Political weapons for coming battles

“What is unfolding around us is the greatest crisis of the capitalist ‘world order’ any of us have known,” said Mary-Alice Waters, the final panelist. “All the treaties, alliances, ‘agreements’ and fictitious structures imposed on us by the victors of the two world imperialist slaughters of the 20th century are being pulled apart at their seams by the

Continued on page 9

‘Sharing our histories and experiences is indispensable’

Below are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters at the presentations of *Teamster Bureaucracy* and *In Defense of the US Working Class* at the Havana International Book Fair Feb. 14. Copyright © by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On behalf of Pathfinder, I want to extend a warm welcome to everyone, and a special thank-you to Yoel [Cordoví of the Cuban Institute of History] and Silvio

[Jova of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers] for their remarks.

For us, it’s not only a privilege to be here today. It’s a necessity. Sharing the histories and experiences of working people in our two countries and learning from each other is indispensable. Only along that road will we be able to draw honest lessons from our defeats and victories alike.

The class struggles in our countries are more strongly interconnected than ever before. What is unfolding around us is the greatest crisis of the capitalist “world order” any of us have known. All the treaties, alliances, “agreements” and fictitious structures imposed on us by the victors of the two world imperialist slaughters of the 20th century are being pulled apart at their seams by the diverging interests and sharpening conflicts between rival capitalist classes and their states. And we are witnessing only the opening stages of their crisis.

What lies ahead are decades of economic, financial and social convulsions that will produce further devastating wars — and more of what the rulers like to obfuscate with terms like “humanitarian crises.” The devastation of the lives of working people such as we have already seen over the last three decades in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and beyond are not plagues originating in nature. They are the products of capitalism.

Their crisis, which is also ours, will end in World War III, if the only class capable of taking state power from the capitalist ruling families — the work-

ing class together with many layers of fellow exploited producers — fails to do so. And this is true in the United States above all.

It may seem strange that I start this way, but it is what the two books we are presenting today are about. *In Defense of the US Working Class* by myself and *Teamster Bureaucracy* by Farrell Dobbs are not just books. They are part of the weaponry we need to arm ourselves for the class battles ahead. Those battles will not be of our choosing or, to begin with, of our making. They will be imposed on us by the capitalist rulers who are driven by the lawful workings of their own system with its inevitable breakdowns.

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But defeats are *not* inevitable.

What is inevitable are new revolutionary struggles. And it is only through those battles that class consciousness

among working people, as well as growing confidence and leadership capacity, will develop.

That is why Farrell Dobbs wrote *Teamster Bureaucracy*, and the other three volumes of the Teamster series (all of which, we are proud to say, are now available here in Spanish translation).

Farrell led workers and our allies in the kind of class combat we will see again. He knew the day was not far off, in historical terms, when an accurate account of the class battles he helped lead would be needed by new generations of vanguard militants among working people, in the U.S. and many other parts of the world.

He would have taken great satisfaction from seeing that begin to happen in Cuba, as witnessed by the discussion we are having here today, as well as elsewhere around the world, including some of the most war-torn regions of the Mideast and Central Asia. And the latter is something I want to say a few words about.

Baghdad book fair

Right now, simultaneously with the Havana International Book Fair, the 46th Baghdad International Book Fair is taking place, and Pathfinder is there. Led by editorial director Steve Clark, Pathfinder is participating for the first time ever.

Book fair organizers in Baghdad have placed the Pathfinder stand — which features the same books you’ll find at our stand here in Havana — in one of

Continued on page 8

‘Sharing histories, experiences’

Continued from page 7

the most prominent locations on the exhibit floor. It’s among the first stands visitors see as they enter, and has been one of the busiest. The multiple rows of people waiting to enter have at times been four deep.

While the Baghdad book fair is a long-standing cultural institution in Iraq, this is the first time in recent years that it has been so truly international with some 650 publishers from Iraq as well as from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Libya, along with a few from Europe.

As some of you know, Pathfinder has been the sole U.S.-based publisher at every Havana International Book Fair for more than 30 years. So it will come as no surprise that Pathfinder is also the sole U.S. publisher in Baghdad right now, save one selling mainly technical titles.

We are certainly the only publisher from any country whose books explain, put forward, and celebrate a communist line of march toward workers power.

It is young people and others we’ve gotten to know in the cities of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan — as well as Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city, devastated since 2014 by its Islamic State occupiers, and then by its U.S. Coalition “liberators” — who laid the groundwork for Pathfinder to be in Baghdad. Our participation has been helped in decisive ways by a well-known national leader of the Iraqi Communist Party. Among other things, he has facilitated contact with a number of publishers in the region as well as militants who gather weekly in the historic book district of Baghdad to read and discuss.

Pathfinder representatives visited this historic district early in the book fair. To their surprise, they discovered a number of Pathfinder books in Arabic already on sale there, bought by a book dealer the very first day of the fair! Among them were three that you will recognize from the Pathfinder table here — *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*.

At the Pathfinder table on the side of the room here, you’ll find a photo of that street bookstall.

The runaway best seller at the Baghdad fair has been *Are They Rich Because*

They’re Smart? also by Jack Barnes. Others include *Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed; *Leon Trotsky on the Jewish Question*; *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara; and *Opening Guns of World War III*, also by Barnes.

The latter, a special issue of the magazine *New International*, published by Pathfinder, tells the truth about the U.S.- and British-led murderous assault on Iraq following the reactionary, calamitous adventure of the invasion of Kuwait by the regime of Saddam Hussein.

And also among the best-sellers is the same book we’re discussing here today — *In Defense of the US Working Class*.

Publishers from several countries have approached Pathfinder representatives there for rights to translate to Arabic and distribute numerous Pathfinder titles. To name just one, an agreement was signed only yesterday with a publisher in Syria to produce an Arabic translation of *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolanda Ferrer.

The first part of that book has already been translated to Farsi and released in Iran. The second part will be released this year. So that powerful account of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba — from the underground in Santiago de Cuba, to the Second Front in the Sierras, to the founding years of the Federation of Cuban Women, and the transformation of both women and men it wrought — will soon be widely available in the two largest countries and cultures of the region.

Our participation in the Baghdad book fair is, above all, the product of collaboration that began many years ago with publishers in Iran such as Talaye Porsoo, Golazin and others, some of whom came to know Pathfinder as students when they took refuge in the U.S. from the brutal repression of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of the shah in the 1960s and ’70s.

One of those publishers, Talaye Porsoo, today has a presence in nearly two dozen cities in Iran and throughout the region, reaching all the way to the Afghanistan capital of Kabul in the east. You’ll find a map showing the spread — city by city — when you visit the Pathfinder table.

Talaye Porsoo has translated to Farsi and published in Iran more than 45 of Pathfinder’s most sought-after books, a large number of them on the Cuban Revolution, including speeches and writings by Fidel and Che.

The growing political openings throughout that war-torn region have enabled Pathfinder to also participate in book fairs and other cultural activities in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq over the last two years. In 2017 those events took place less than 50 kilometers [31 miles] from what were then the front lines of the battle to drive the Islamic State out of the city of Mosul. Among the targets of the IS during its rule was the once magnificent library that was part of the university in that ancient center of civilization. It was largely destroyed by Islamic



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Pathfinder booth at Erbil International Book Fair in Kurdish region of Iraq, October 2018. Books Pathfinder publishes put forward working-class line of march toward taking state power. Contacts made in Erbil helped lay groundwork for Pathfinder at Baghdad book fair this year.

State, its irreplaceable contents burned.

Two months ago, at the invitation of a group of young people who came looking for Pathfinder at the most recent book fair in Erbil, two Pathfinder representatives traveled to Mosul to join in activities they’ve been organizing since September to rebuild the university library and the Mosul Museum, as well as libraries in the city’s high schools.

Many participants donated books for school libraries in Mosul — some a single title, others more. And Pathfinder was among the donors.

Why these books?

I’ve taken the time — perhaps more than I should have — to begin to describe the political and cultural life that is now blooming in these Mideast regions ravaged by imperialism and years of war for one reason alone. It’s because *nothing can better capture why Pathfinder publishes the books we do*.

Nothing can better explain why many hundreds of working people — throughout the world — dig deeply into their pockets to enable us to respond to such opportunities whenever and wherever they open up.

And nothing better helps answer the questions that are at the center of *In Defense of the US Working Class* because nowhere in the world do working people lack the capacity to make a socialist revolution. But it is only through our own struggles that we discover those capacities, fighting together along that course. And, as Malcolm X, one of the greatest leaders of the U.S. working class, said so eloquently, that is how we will awaken to our own worth.

You will find in the pages of *In Defense of the US Working Class* why we categorically reject the view promoted by the liberal bourgeois and leftist media that the electoral victory of Donald Trump registered, above all, a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny and other forms of ideological reaction among working people in the United States.

You will read here why we utterly reject the contempt for working people whose skin is “white” expressed so baldly by Democratic Party candidate Hillary Clinton in the last presidential elections. Labeling them an irredeemable “basket of deplorables,” Clinton singled out especially “married white women,” whom she said didn’t vote for her because they were too weak to stand up to their husbands and sons.

As you will discover in the pages of *In Defense of the US Working Class*, the last year and a half of strikes, marches

and other labor actions across the country by teachers, hotel workers, nurses and other predominantly female workers have alone put paid to that slander.

You will be able to see why the exploding class anger of the “yellow vests” in France, as well as the rejection by working people in the United Kingdom of the imperialist abomination called the European Union, inspires us with growing confidence, not fear.

You will understand why we demand “Amnesty now!” for all undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S. The entire history of the working-class movement has taught us it’s a cornerstone of the fight to strengthen the working class and the possibility — through waves of struggle — to transform our trade unions into instruments of revolutionary class struggle.

Here you will learn about our demand for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Africa, from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and from Korea — to say nothing of Colombia, Japan — and Guantánamo. Why the dismantlement of NATO with its bases throughout the world is in the interests of working people everywhere.

And we insist without the slightest equivocation that, “Yes, a socialist revolution in the U.S. is possible.” But even more important, we know that revolutionary struggles there — and elsewhere around the world — are coming. And it is only through those battles that new generations of working people, and the youth who are won to their side, will transform themselves as they find their own road to becoming communists.

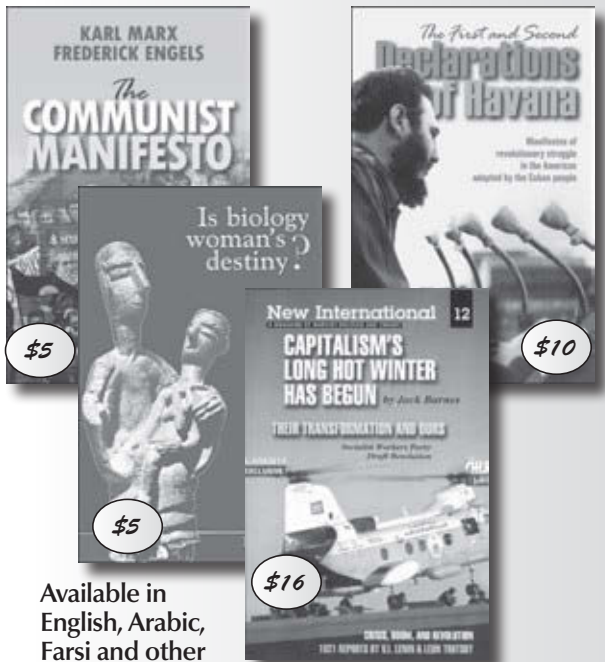
It is our own experiences in the U.S. class struggle that form the bedrock of our convictions on these questions. And that is what you will find in the pages of *In Defense of the US Working Class* and all four volumes of the Teamster series.

If I may borrow the words of Farrell Dobbs in his “Afterword” to *Teamster Bureaucracy*, the principal lesson to derive from the Teamsters’ course of struggle for more than seven years “is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, workers [engaged in struggle] can be overcome.”

The principal lesson is the opposite. With the honest and truly revolutionary leadership they deserve, it is the oppressed and exploited toilers who can triumph.

And that is also the principal lesson taught us by the men and women of Cuba who — under Fidel’s leadership — carried the Cuban Revolution to victory, and have held the imperialist colossus at bay — for 60 years and counting.

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‘A perspective we don’t often hear’

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diverging interests and sharpening conflicts between rival capitalist classes and their states.”

Waters said the two books being discussed “are part of the weaponry we need to arm ourselves for the class battles ahead.” Communists in the United States and other countries use these political weapons as they discuss with fellow workers with whom they are engaged in common struggles.

She reported that volunteers headed by Steve Clark, editorial director of Pathfinder, were simultaneously participating for the first time in the Baghdad International Book Fair. And she described how in that war-torn part of the world — from the Mideast to Central Asia — they were finding a thirst for books that offer a revolutionary working-class perspective.

Quoting Dobbs in his “Afterword” to *Teamster Bureaucracy*, Waters said the main lesson from the Teamsters’ course of struggle “is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, workers can be overcome.” The lesson for fighting workers is the opposite, she said. “With the honest and truly revolutionary leadership they deserve, it is the oppressed and exploited toilers who can triumph.” (Waters’ presentation is reprinted on page 7.)

‘U.S. workers are not source of racism’

First to take the floor during the discussion period was José Ángel Maury de Toro, international relations secretary of the Union of Young Communists. He noted that the real conditions facing working people in the United States “are not well-known among young people in Cuba.” And new generations “are further and further away from the big social transformations of the early years of the revolution.”

He said this makes books published by Pathfinder “valuable tools for Cuban youth” to learn about the lessons of struggles against capitalist exploitation — and to answer those who “argue that the only way for us to develop is capitalism.”

Fernando García Bielsa, who for many years

served in Cuba’s diplomatic offices at the United Nations and in Washington, D.C., said most Cubans “don’t really know the United States” and the impact of the economic crisis on working people there. “We need opportunities like this to get out the truth even more broadly to the Cuban people,” he said.

Griselda Aguilera, who when she was only 7 years old joined Cuba’s 1961 literacy campaign, spoke about what she has learned on visits to the United States, where she has spoken to audiences about the Cuban Revolution and her experiences in the massive drive that wiped out illiteracy here in one year.

The image presented in the international media “that working people in the United States are racist, violent, opposed to solidarity is not true,” Aguilera insisted. “I’ve met construction workers, teachers, members of unions and churches. Racism in the U.S. doesn’t come from ordinary people — it comes from the governing elite that benefits from sowing divisions. Working people in the U.S. defend their rights.”

When the meeting concluded, audience members bought more than 140 Pathfinder books, including seven sets of Dobbs’ four-volume Teamster series.

Following the book fair in Havana, communist workers from the United States and the United Kingdom were invited to three other events to present these books. One was a meeting, organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, at the University of Santa Clara in central Cuba. Another was an exchange with workers and mechanical engineering students at the Antillana de Acero steel plant in Havana.

A third event was held at the Cigar Workers Palace, a CTC-affiliated community center and museum of the Cuban workers movement that is being established in the working-class Havana neighborhood of Cayo Hueso. The Cigar Workers Palace was the site of the 1939 founding congress of the CTC.

Liberals champion FBI role against Trump

Continued from front page

And, when workers don’t cast their ballots “the right way,” the FBI and its cohorts move to annul the vote by finding a “crime or misdemeanor” to pin on the president.

In one interview about the book, McCabe explains he and other FBI operatives and Justice Department officials wanted to recruit cabinet members to invoke the 25th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to oust Trump from office. That amendment says a president can be removed if he’s “unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office.”

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein offered to wear a wire to secretly record his meetings with the president, McCabe claims, to collect evidence to strengthen their efforts to recruit allies in their plot.

McCabe admits the FBI had been trying to block Trump from being elected for quite a while. Referring to ex-FBI Director James Comey’s earlier failed efforts to sway the election for Hillary Clinton, McCabe writes piously, “The FBI does everything possible not to influence elections,” but then admits, “In 2016, it seems we did.”

In this case McCabe and his co-conspirators moved rapidly against Trump after he fired Comey, who had been maneuvering to get rid of the president himself.

Mueller has produced no evidence

Mueller, yet another ex-FBI boss, has been plugging away as special counsel appointed by Rosenstein, supposedly probing for evidence of collusion between Trump and Moscow to sway the 2016 election. Up to now Mueller, like all prosecutors under capitalism, has gone after Trump’s associates, seeking to get something on them to pressure them to turn on the president.

While he has yet to produce any evidence of collusion, he has coerced convictions or guilty pleas from eight people associated with Trump on other matters. He is reportedly planning to submit his report to Attorney General Barr soon. The liberals hope they can use Mueller’s report to spawn further probes by Democratic-led congressional committees or friendly prosecutors in New York and elsewhere.

One result of Mueller’s operation has been to turn Michael Cohen, a former Trump lawyer, into a weapon against Trump. Cohen began public testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee Feb. 27. Mueller had prosecuted and convicted Cohen on charges of lying to Congress earlier.

The *New York Times* and other anti-Trump organs have reported Cohen will call Trump a liar, a racist and a conman — and say that he is “guilty” of overestimating his wealth and knew about hush money payments Cohen made to Stormy Daniels, as well as other charges. Other than providing talking points to those intent on bringing down the president, it isn’t clear if his testimony will have any other effect.

The Socialist Workers Party campaign of candidates running across the country explains they have no sympathy for Trump or any brand of capitalist politician. They all, including those Democrats who call themselves socialists, share the same goal — to bolster U.S. imperialist interests worldwide and defend the profit system on the backs of working people.

The SWP campaign explains that all efforts to use the rulers’ political police as a tool in politics are dangerous for the working class. The party campaigns for the working class and all those exploited and oppressed by capitalism to unite and break with the two-party system and chart a course to take political power into their own hands.

Trump, Kim meet

Continued from front page

the U.S. rulers.

Ever since an armistice halted the fighting in 1953 the U.S. rulers have refused to sign a peace treaty. “To prepare the ground to ensure a Korea free of nuclear weapons, the Socialist Workers Party demands that Washington immediately sign a peace treaty ending the murderous but ultimately failed war of conquest it waged,” Steve Clark wrote Feb. 15 in a message to the people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea from the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. The message welcomed the announcement of the summit meeting.

“I don’t want to rush anyone,” President Donald Trump said going into the meeting, indicating the U.S. rulers see progress. “As long as there is no testing, we’re happy.”

Seoul, Pyongyang rail initiative

As the Washington-Pyongyang talks continue, both Korean governments have been discussing economic and social collaboration. They surveyed railway lines in the North last November in preparation for the restoration of rail links between the two countries. Officials from both governments then connected the northern and southern tracks at a ceremony Dec. 25. But they cannot re-establish rail travel — which would spur economic development — without Seoul breaching sanctions imposed by Washington.

U.S. rulers use their sanctions to try to force their will on the DPRK government. And they’ve pressed other governments and international bodies — from Beijing to the UN — successfully to follow suit. These fall with ruinous impact on working people there. The North Korean government announced Feb. 21 it would cut daily rations, that many people depend on, from 550 to 300 grams (10.6 ounces) per person because of food shortages this year.

While the imperialist enforcers of United Nations sanctions claim these “are not intended” to hit “the civilian population,” the U.N. came close to halting all its humanitarian aid to North Korea last year. The U.N. admits that over 40 percent of the North Korean population is undernourished.

The U.S. government “must lift all sanctions against the DPRK,” Clark said in the SWP message. “We demand withdrawal of U.S. troops and weaponry from Korea’s soil, skies and waters, as well as an end to the U.S. rulers’ ‘nuclear umbrella’ over South Korea and Japan.” The U.S. capitalist rulers are the only power to ever use nuclear weapons, unleashing vast destruction and death when they bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Ridding Korea of nuclear weapons would reinforce deep opposition among working people inside Japan to that country’s rulers obtaining their own nuclear arsenal. Following the first summit between Kim and Trump last year, the Japanese government halted evacuation drills it organizes in preparation for a possible North Korean nuclear attack.

Liberal opponents of Trump in the U.S. try to differentiate themselves from his Korea policy, pushing a more warlike course. A bellicose opinion piece by Nicholas Eberstadt in the *New York Times* Feb. 25 accused Trump of giving “one-sided concessions” to Kim. Washington should adopt “a policy of maximum pressure,” he demanded, saying, “A suffocation campaign must be enforced ruthlessly.”

But any steps to reduce military tensions in the region create better conditions for working people to organize to fight for their interests. And the prospect for increased trade and social interaction are boosting sentiment for Korean reunification.

“Korea is one!” Clark said in his message.

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